

AMENDMENT(S) TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A sterilization case assembly, comprising:

a plurality of sterilization cases including a first sterilization case and a second sterilization case, said second sterilization case stacked directly upon said first sterilization case in a vertical direction, said second sterilization case offset from said first sterilization case in a frontward to rearward direction, each of said plurality of sterilization cases being ~~separately~~ selectively movable between a closed position and ~~at least a partially~~ an open position, said second sterilization case offset from said first sterilization case in a direction transverse to said vertical direction when both said first and said second sterilization cases are in closed positions, in said closed position each of said plurality of sterilization cases having a general box shape and ~~separately~~ including a plurality of walls defining said general box shape, in said closed position said plurality of walls of each of said plurality of sterilization cases including a top wall and a bottom wall, said top wall and said bottom wall of each of said plurality of sterilization cases being substantially parallel relative to one another in said closed position and generally horizontally oriented in said closed position, said bottom wall of said second sterilization case at least partially directly contacting said top wall of said first sterilization case when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position, said first and said second sterilization cases being substantially identical to one another when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position, each of said plurality of sterilization cases including at least one drawer therein selectively slidable from said closed position to said open position in a rearward to frontward direction.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The sterilization case assembly of claim 1, wherein at least one said case includes a plurality of drawers.

4. (Original) The sterilization case assembly of claim 3, wherein said at least one case that includes a plurality of drawers has a hinged front cover.

5. (Original) The sterilization case assembly of claim 1, wherein said second sterilization case includes a hinged lid.

6. (Previously Presented) The sterilization case assembly of claim 5, wherein said lid is removable and rotates about a generally horizontal axis.

7. (Original) The sterilization case assembly of claim 5, wherein said first sterilization case includes at least one handle, said second sterilization case includes at least one recessed pocket, at least one said handle interlocks with at least one said recessed pocket when said second sterilization case is stacked upon said first sterilization case in a vertical direction.

8. (Currently Amended) A sterilization case assembly, comprising:  
a plurality of sterilization cases including a first sterilization case and a second sterilization case, said second sterilization case offset from said first sterilization case in a frontward to rearward direction, said first sterilization case including at least one handle, said second sterilization case including at least one recessed pocket, at least one said handle interlocking with at least one said recessed pocket when said second sterilization case is stacked upon said first sterilization case in a vertical direction, each of said plurality of sterilization cases

being ~~separately~~ selectively movable between a closed position and an open position, in said closed position each of said plurality of sterilization cases having a general box shape and ~~separately~~ including a plurality of walls defining said general box shape, in said closed position said plurality of walls of each of said plurality of sterilization cases including a top wall and a bottom wall, said top wall and said bottom wall of each of said plurality of sterilization cases being substantially parallel relative to one another in said closed position and generally horizontally oriented in said closed position, said bottom wall of said second sterilization case at least partially directly contacting said top wall of said first sterilization case when said second sterilization case is stacked upon said first sterilization case in a vertical direction and when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position, each of said plurality of sterilization cases including at least one drawer therein selectively slidable from said closed position to said open position in a rearward to frontward direction.

9. (Original) The sterilization case assembly of claim 8, wherein said second sterilization case is offset from said first sterilization case in a direction transverse to said vertical direction.

10. (Withdrawn) A sterilization case, comprising:

a top having at least one top registration element; and

a bottom connected to said top, said bottom including at least one bottom registration element.

11. (Withdrawn) The sterilization case of claim 10, wherein said at least one top registration element is offset from said at least one bottom registration element in a direction parallel with said bottom.

12. (Withdrawn) The sterilization case of claim 10, further including opposed sides connected to said bottom, said at least one bottom registration element being closer to one said side than said at least one top registration element.

13. (Withdrawn) The sterilization case of claim 10, wherein said top is at least one of a lid and an end cap.

14. (Withdrawn) The sterilization case of claim 10, further including a plurality of drawers.

15. (Withdrawn) The sterilization case claim 14, further including a hinged front cover.

16. (Withdrawn) A sterilization case, comprising:

a lid;

a drawer connected to said lid; and

a latch interlocking said lid and said drawer.

17. (Withdrawn) The sterilization case of claim 16, wherein said lid is capable of rotation, said drawer is capable of translation, and said latch allows one of said rotation and said translation after an actuation of said latch.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of assembling a sterilization case assembly, comprising the steps of:

stacking a plurality of sterilization cases including a first sterilization case and a second sterilization case, said second sterilization case stacked directly upon said first sterilization case in a vertical direction;

offsetting said second sterilization case from said first sterilization case in a frontward to rearward direction;

providing both said first and said second sterilization cases are ~~separately~~ selectively movable between a closed position and ~~at least a partially~~ an open position, each of said plurality of sterilization cases including at least one drawer therein selectively slidable from said closed position to said open position in a rearward to frontward direction;

providing that in said closed position each of said first and said second sterilization cases have a general box shape and ~~separately~~ include a plurality of walls defining said general box shape, in said closed position said plurality of walls of each of said first and said second sterilization cases including a top wall and a bottom wall, said top wall and said bottom wall of each of said first and said second sterilization cases being substantially parallel relative to one another in said closed position and generally horizontally oriented in said closed position, said bottom wall of said second sterilization case at least partially directly contacting said top wall of said first sterilization case when said second sterilization case is stacked upon said first sterilization case in a vertical direction and when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position; and

offsetting said second sterilization case from said first sterilization case in a direction transverse to said vertical direction when both said first and said second sterilization cases are in closed positions, said first and said second sterilization cases being substantially identical to one another when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, further including the step of interlocking said second sterilization case with said first sterilization case.

20. (Previously Presented) The sterilization case assembly of claim 1, wherein in said closed position said plurality of walls of each of said plurality of sterilization cases includes a front wall and a rear wall, said front wall and said rear wall of each of said plurality of sterilization cases being substantially parallel relative to one another in said closed position, said front wall of said second sterilization case being transversely offset from and substantially parallel to said front wall of said first sterilization case when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position, said rear wall of said second sterilization case being transversely offset from and substantially parallel to said rear wall of said first sterilization case when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position.

21. (Previously Presented) The sterilization case assembly of claim 1, wherein said plurality of walls of each of said plurality of sterilization cases includes a generally vertically oriented rear wall coupled with said top and bottom walls, said top wall including at least one partially spherical top registration element, said bottom wall including at least one partially spherical bottom registration element, said top registration element being closer to said rear wall than said bottom registration element when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position, said bottom registration element of said second sterilization case directly contacting said top registration element of said first sterilization case.

22. (Previously Presented) The sterilization case assembly of claim 9, wherein said plurality of walls of each of said plurality of sterilization cases includes a generally vertically

oriented rear wall coupled with said top and bottom walls, said top wall including at least one partially spherical top registration element, said bottom wall including at least one partially spherical bottom registration element, said top registration element being closer to said rear wall than said bottom registration element when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position, said bottom registration element of said second sterilization case directly contacting said top registration element of said first sterilization case.

23. (Previously Presented) The sterilization case assembly of claim 18, wherein said plurality of walls of each of said plurality of sterilization cases includes a generally vertically oriented rear wall coupled with said top and bottom walls, said top wall including at least one partially spherical top registration element, said bottom wall including at least one partially spherical bottom registration element, said top registration element being closer to said rear wall than said bottom registration element when each of said first and said second sterilization cases are in said closed position, said bottom registration element of said second sterilization case directly contacting said top registration element of said first sterilization case.

24. (New) The sterilization case assembly of claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of sterilization cases is configured for providing organization, storage, and sterilization for at least one surgical instrument contained therein, said second sterilization case being offset from said first sterilization case in order to provide stability to said first and second sterilization cases when said second sterilization case is stacked on said first sterilization case and any of said plurality of drawers are slid to said open position.